

VZCZCXRO0319
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHAK #1311 2511233
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 081233Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0721
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1450
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 1765
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 6243

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001311

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BAGHDAD FOR J CARWILE
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/08/2019

TAGS: ECON PREL SENV IZ SY TU

SUBJECT: PROGRESS AT TURKEY - IRAQ - SYRIA WATER TRILATERAL

REF: A. ANKARA 752

¶B. ANKARA 687

Classified By: Economic Counselor Dale Eppler for reasons 1.4 b,d

1.(C) MFA Regional and Transboundary Waters Department Head Sibel Algan said the GOT made progress at the September 3 Turkey-Syria-Iraq Water Trilateral meeting in moving towards joint watershed management, a long-time GOT policy goal (reflets). The three countries agreed to create a Team of Experts (hydrological and meteorological technical specialists) who will advise the trilateral process on water flow and rainfall in the Euphrates basin. They also agreed to create a joint database of hydrological and meteorological data, so that all sides have the same information on the amount of water available in the watershed. They also agreed to re-calibration of the instruments used to measure water flow at the Euphrates observation points. According to Algan, the three countries use different apparatus to measure water flow, and the instruments need to be re-calibrated regularly to avoid wildly different measurements. Algan said this was the first time the three countries have agreed to any joint steps towards managing the Euphrates basin.

¶2. (C) The Iraqi delegation asked Turkey to increase the outflow from Ataturk dam to 750 cubic meters per second (as reported reflets, Turkey committed in 1987 to maintain Euphrates flow into Syria at 500 cubic meters per second). Turkish Water Works (DSI) experts, however, said such an increase was impossible, given that the water level at Ataturk dam is at only 10 percent of capacity. Turkey did agree to increase water flow on the Euphrates when "surplus water" is available, and Syria agreed to pass all that surplus flow on to Iraq. However, unless there is significant increase in rainfall in the Ataturk reservoir watershed, the "surplus" available will increase total flow to at most 550 cm/s this year. Algan said Turkish flow since June has been averaging 517-520 cubic meters per second, slightly above the agreed 500 cm/s.

SILLIMAN

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